

## Dental Care

My daughter was only thirteen when she found the toothbrush in our backyard  
Buried beneath the big pile of leaves that I never raked up  
From two autumns ago  
We always taught her that if she wanted to *own a thing* she'd need to take care of her  
toothbrush  
She walked to every house on our street asking if someone had lost a toothbrush  
They smiled and told her no. They said it was probably very old, and maybe some little boy  
or girl  
Lost it one day while they were playing  
The homeless toothbrush was an impossibility for her so she made it her own  
She gave it a home and a purpose  
We never knew about the toothbrush until she'd had it for three weeks  
She kept it under her pillow  
When we found it we threw it out because the bristles were stained red from gum disease  
She told us that it was like that when she found it  
But we took her to the dentist anyway.  
When she found it I think she decided that she  
Would rest her faith deep between the bristles  
Where it could rest and fester.  
She believed too strongly in modern medicine, we thought.  
She wasn't allowed to the dentist anymore.